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INTELLIGENCE BRIEF

INCREASED SUPPLIES SHIPPED
TO THE SOUTHERN PART OF NORTH VIETNAM
DURING THE FOURTH QUARTER OF 1965

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

Office of Research and Reports

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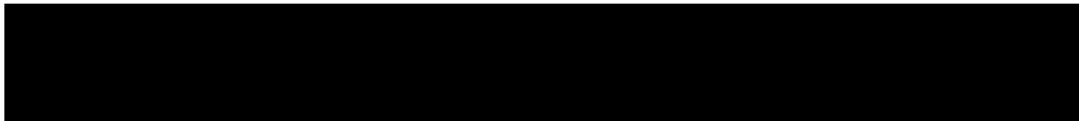
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FOREWORD



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INCREASED SUPPLIES SHIPPED
TO THE SOUTHERN PART OF NORTH VIETNAM
DURING THE FOURTH QUARTER OF 1965*

Summary

Supplies shipped into the three southernmost provinces** of North Vietnam during October and November and planned for December*** increased at a progressive rate each month during the period and appear to be far in excess of the needs of the construction units and troops estimated to be stationed in the area. The excess supplies presumably are being stockpiled, used to maintain much larger units than are believed to be located in the southern provinces of North Vietnam, or infiltrated into Laos and South Vietnam at a much higher rate than has been estimated in the past. Most of the shipments consisted of rice, followed by gasoline, military items, and machinery and tools. This expanding movement of supplies during the fourth quarter clearly demonstrates that the North Vietnamese are maintaining an effective makeshift transport system in the southern provinces in spite of US/GVN air attacks.

* The estimates and conclusions in this brief represent the best judgment of this Office as of 30 December 1965.

** Nghe An, Ha Tinh, and Quang Binh Provinces -- an area also known as Military Region IV (see the map).

*** Data available for the first half of December indicate that the North Vietnamese probably will achieve the planned goals for movement of supplies shown in Table 1.

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1. Amount of Supplies Shipped

During October and November the North Vietnamese shipped roughly 6,000 and 15,000 tons,* respectively, of supplies to the three southernmost provinces of North Vietnam known as Military Region IV. This region is a jumping-off area for movement of men and materials into South Vietnam and Laos. [REDACTED]

the North Vietnamese planned to ship about 33,000 tons of supplies into Military Region IV during December (see Table 1). Although [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the data may include some double counting, it appears that there has been an absolute increase in the amount of supplies shipped into the area in each succeeding month during the fourth quarter.** Because the supplies have been shipped into an area that is for the most part rural, thinly populated, and agriculturally self-sufficient, it is assumed that the supplies are almost certainly destined for military or government use and not for the civilians.

A total of about 9,600 tons of rice was shipped into Military Region IV during the two-month period October-November, and about 11,600 tons were planned for shipment in December. It is believed that about 40,000 troops and construction workers are stationed in this region. These units probably consumed 3,600 tons of rice (at 2 pounds per person per day) during the three-month period ending in December. At this rate of consumption, 17,600 tons of rice would have accumulated by the end of December, an amount sufficient to support an additional 190,000 North Vietnamese for three months.

A total of approximately 2,700 tons of gasoline were shipped into Vinh and points south during the two-month period October-November, and about 1,600 tons were scheduled to be delivered in December. The North Vietnamese maintain an estimated 500 trucks in the area south of Vinh, plus an unknown number being used in Laos. At 5 miles per gallon, 4,300 tons of gasoline could support 1,500 trucks, each running 50 miles per day for three months.*** Thus, if only 500 trucks are being used at this rate, about 2,900 tons of gasoline are being moved into the area in excess of the requirements during this period, less the relatively small amounts needed for mechanized construction equipment.

* All tonnages are given in short tons.

** Comparable data for earlier periods are not available.

*** Converted at the rate of 328 gallons per short ton.

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The amounts of military goods moving into Military Region IV in the last three months are significant in terms of both the area into which the goods have been moved and the increase in amounts shipped. All movements of military goods [REDACTED] have terminated in the Cho Cui - Tan Ap area of Military Region IV. This area is located on route 15, the major logistics route into Laos via Mu Gia Pass. The increase in the amounts of military goods apparently being shipped into the area is marked. Some 67 tons [REDACTED] in October, 856 tons in November, and 2,418 tons were planned for December.

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Of the 600 tons of "drugs" [REDACTED] shipped into Military Region IV during the two-month period October-November, about 38 tons were sent to Cho Cui and 460 tons were sent to Quang Binh Province (see Table 2). Quang Binh Province includes not only the Cho Cui - Tan Ap area and route 15 but also the route used by infiltrators moving around the end of the Demilitarized Zone. [REDACTED]

2. Transport Movement on Damaged Routes*

Air attacks have interdicted numerous highway, railroad, and combination railroad/highway bridges on the major land routes leading south from Hanoi. These routes include the Hanoi-Vinh railroad; highway routes 1A, 8, 15, and 152; and the Duc Tho - Tan Ap railroad in the area south of Vinh. Although the destruction on these routes has definitely created problems for traffic movement, the amount of traffic moving south from Hanoi appears to have increased substantially during October-December. This suggests that the North Vietnamese are maintaining an effective makeshift transportation system in the southern provinces, and probably that the most important effect of the air strikes is that the North Vietnamese have been forced to move traffic at night and to shift from land to water transport.

In most cases, destroyed bridges have been bypassed by hastily constructed fords or by the rerouting of trucks to highways and bypass roads that have not been as heavily bombed. For example, truck traffic has been shifted from route 1A to 15 at points north of Vinh. Where destroyed bridges spanned rivers that could not be forded, pontoon bridges and ferries have been used to keep the traffic moving. To aid in maintaining the flow of traffic, the North Vietnamese have sent mechanized roadbuilding equipment (scrapers, tractors, dump trucks, and bulldozers) and approximately 40,000 troops and construction workers into the southern provinces.

* For a discussion of the routes used, see the Appendix.

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Now that the dry season has arrived, difficulties associated with maintaining dirt roads and interdicted river crossings will be considerably less than during the wet season.

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Table 1

North Vietnam: Estimated Gross Tonnage of Supplies
Shipped into the Southern Provinces
by Mode of Transport and Commodity a/
October-December 1965

	Mode of Transport					
	October			November		
	Short Tons	Percent	Short Tons	Percent	Short Tons	Percent
Truck (north and south of Vinh)	2,701	N.A.	6,849	N.A.	7,579 b/	23
Rail/inland water c/	2,777	N.A.	6,300 d/	N.A.	9,900 e/	31
Rail (south of Vinh)	421	N.A.	1,798	N.A.	9,158 b/	28
Coastal water	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	6,000 f/	18
Total	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	32,637	100
Commodities Known to be Included in Totals g/						
Rice	4,332	73	5,272	61	11,580	69
Gasoline	1,027	18	1,664	19	1,603	10
Military goods	67	1	856	10	2,418	14
Drugs	65	1	544	6	0	0
Machinery and tools	164	3	176	2	1,136	7
General merchandise	244	4	135	2	0	0
Total	5,899	100	8,647	100	16,737	100

a. Including Nahe An, Ha Tinh, and Quang Binh Provinces. Data should not be considered complete or final. Coverage was not complete for all modes of transport or for any one mode, particularly in October and November; however, it is likely that data included some double counting -- for example, supplies that moved on the rail line south of Vinh probably were already counted as having moved to Vinh.

b. North Vietnamese plan for performance during December.

c. Including rail transport south to Hoang Mai and all inland water transport.

d. Estimate derived by assuming that the daily performance during the first 15 days was the same as during October and that during the last 15 days the rate increased to the daily level given for the end of November.

e. Estimated by assuming that the daily level given for the end of November continued throughout December.

f. North Vietnamese estimate of cargo-handling capacity at Ben Thuy that could be allocated to coastal traffic.

g. The commodity composition of supplies shipped by rail/inland water and coastal water is not known.

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Table 2

North Vietnam: Estimated Gross Tonnage of Supplies
Shipped into the Duc Tho - Tan Ap Area
by Mode of Transport and Commodity
October-December 1965

	Mode of Transport					
	October		November		December ^{a/}	
	Short Tons	Percent	Short Tons	Percent	Short Tons	Percent
Sea/truck	1,379	48	146	N.A.	2,000	14
Inland water	1,070	37	N.A.	N.A.	2,600	19
Rail (south of Vinh)	421	15	1,798	N.A.	9,238	67
Total	<u>2,870</u>	<u>100</u>	N.A.	N.A.	<u>13,838</u>	<u>100</u>
Commodity						
Rice	1,943	68	1,088	N.A.	9,574	69
Gasoline	405	14	N.A.	N.A.	416	3
Military goods	67	2	856	N.A.	2,418	17
Drugs	35	1	N.A.	N.A.	0	0
Machinery and tools	290	10	N.A.	N.A.	104	1
General merchandise	130	5	N.A.	N.A.	1,326	10
Total	<u>2,870</u>	<u>100</u>	N.A.	N.A.	<u>13,838</u>	<u>100</u>

a. North Vietnamese plan for performance during December.

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APPENDIX

ROUTES USED TO TRANSPORT SUPPLIES
INTO MILITARY REGION IV

Freight is being moved south from Hanoi by a combination of rail and inland water, by coastal water, and by truck transport. Rail and inland water transport account for about 60 percent of the recorded traffic moving in Military Region IV during October, November, and December; trucks and coastal water account for 40 percent. Generally, trucks are used in rural areas when there are no alternate modes of modern transport. Wherever waterways or railroads are available, they are used for the most part in place of trucks.

Depending on the type of cargo, rail freight from Hanoi and points north appears to be transloaded at either the Ninh Binh area or at Hoang Mai, which is located south of Thanh Hoa. Petroleum in 55-gallon drums seems to be transloaded from rail cars to trucks and watercraft in the Ninh Binh area. The petroleum is then shipped to Vinh and points south via the inland and coastal waterways and by trucks along routes 1A and 15. The transshipment point at Hoang Mai generally handles supplies other than gasoline. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] 330 tons were being transloaded each night at the Hoang Mai railroad station. This quantity of rail traffic is well within the estimate of 300 to 500 tons moving south to Vinh soon after the line was opened to traffic in May 1964.

Goods transloaded at Hoang Mai move south to Vinh via the inland canals, by truck, and by coastal waterways. In an effort to improve the inland water capability during the dry season, the North Vietnamese are dredging the canals around Thanh Hoa and above Vinh. In November, [REDACTED] at least 3,800 workers were engaged in the dredging project. The USSR sent about 60 small suction dredges, suitable for use on the inland waterways, to Haiphong during October and November. Truck transport between Hanoi and Vinh appears to operate in two ways -- either the trucks go directly to Vinh from Hanoi or a shuttle truck system transports the goods between Hanoi and Thanh Hoa and between Thanh Hoa and Vinh.

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Cargo that is destined for movement into southern Laos via Mu Gia Pass arrives in the Duc Tho - Tan Ap area by rail, truck, and water. Maintenance of the transport routes to Mu Gia Pass has

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been given a high priority. Recently both transport and construction in the area south of Vinh appear to have been placed under military control. A makeshift railroad operating between Duc Tho and the Tan Ap - Bai Duc Thon area delivered approximately 2,200 tons of supplies into the Tan Ap area during October and November. Furthermore, [REDACTED] the North Vietnamese planned to deliver approximately 9,200 tons of supplies to the Tan Ap area by rail in December. Sampans and barges from Ben Thuy, the port for Vinh, and points north sailed up the Ngan Sau River and delivered about 1,000 tons of cargo at Tan Ap and other villages along the river during October. It appeared that approximately 2,600 tons of supplies would be delivered in Tan Ap by inland water transport in December. Supplies moving through the port of Ha Tinh are carried by truck over route 152 and down route 15 to Tan Ap. Trucks delivered approximately 1,400 tons to the Tan Ap area in October and were scheduled to deliver 2,000 tons in December. It appears that supplies moving southwest from Tan Ap toward Mu Gia Pass and southern Laos are carried by truck along route 15.

Most of the supplies destined for the coastal areas south of Vinh are transported by truck and watercraft. Trucks usually follow route 1A, although in recent months it appears that the North Vietnamese have placed a low priority on maintaining the lower sections of route 1A for truck traffic. Watercraft moving south from Vinh probably sail close to the shore and make stops along the coast. Most of the supplies sent southeast from Vinh and Ben Thuy are probably used to support construction units along route 1A and troops stationed in the coastal area of Quang Binh Province. At present it appears that the transportation net along the coast south of Vinh is not used as a major logistics supply line. However, recent information indicates that the North Vietnamese may be using the rivers below Dong Hoi in conjunction with routes 102 and 103 to maintain a small flow of supplies into southern Laos. In addition, route 1A probably serves as the major route for movement of troops to the infiltration trails into Laos and into South Vietnam.

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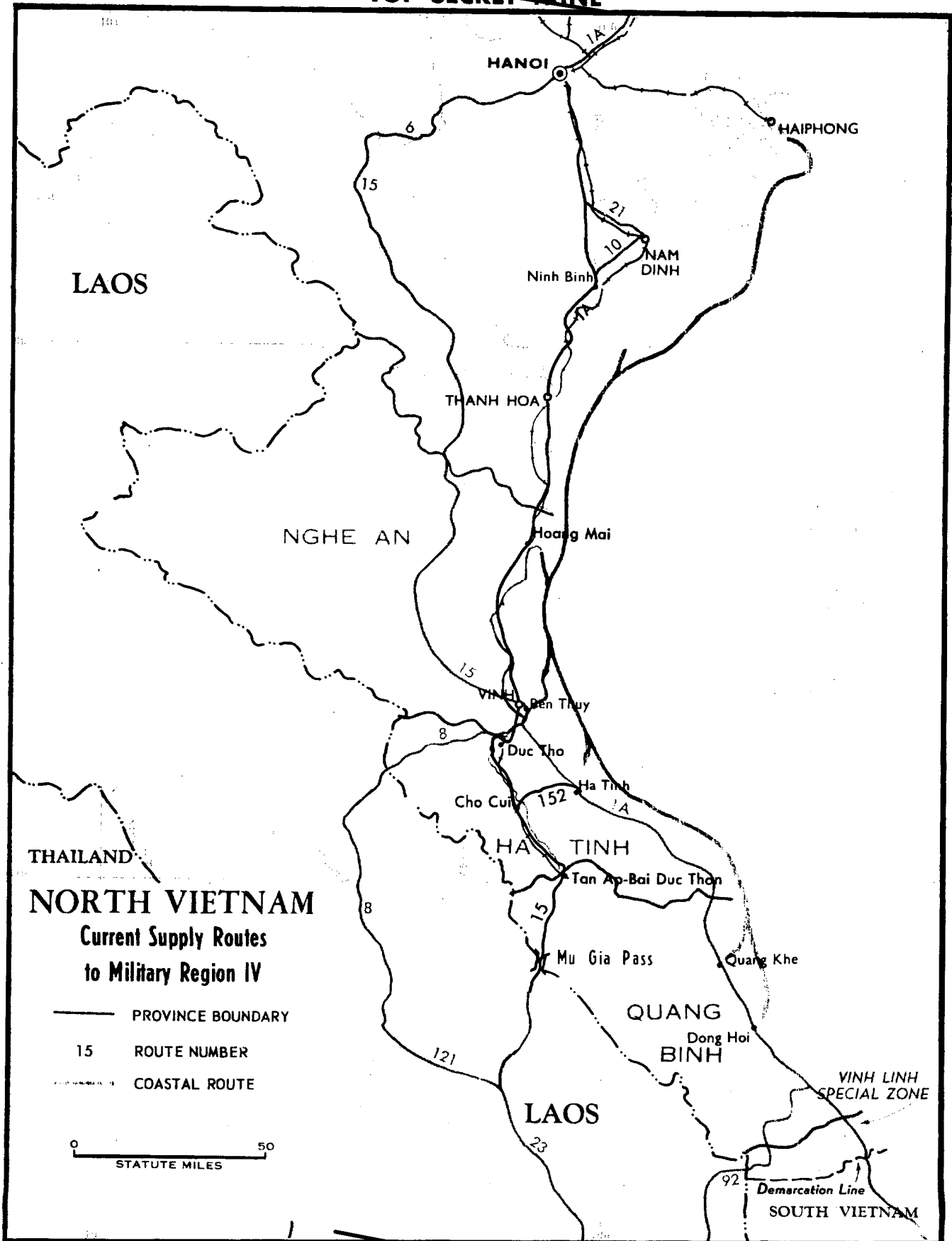
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